



News Release

Public Affairs Office
P.O. Box 1715
Baltimore, MD 21203
(410) 962-2809
Fax: (410) 962-3660

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Contact: Mary Beth Thompson
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Corps of Engineers and St. Mary's County partner to restore St. Mary's River watershed

Baltimore – Federal and county officials signed an agreement Friday that will ultimately help the county manage its growth, restore damaged streams and protect the environment. Representatives of the Baltimore District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Saint Mary's County, Md., endorsed a feasibility cost-sharing agreement for the St. Mary's River Watershed Restoration Study.

The agreement builds on watershed characterization research started by St. Mary's College, St. Mary's City, Md. Using that study as a basis, Baltimore District engineers will work with county staff and college faculty to find environmental restoration opportunities and to look for ways to prevent further environmental damage from occurring in the St. Mary's River watershed.

St. Mary's County has experienced rapid growth in the last five years, changing the once-rural character of the county. Alterations to the rivers and streams and to water runoff characteristics have resulted. County officials recognized that the coastal tributaries were in danger of being permanently damaged. The county sought the expertise of the Corps of Engineers for help in counteracting detrimental effects on the watershed. The agreement to conduct a comprehensive restoration study resulted.

The federal and county governments are sharing the study and plan development costs, which total approximately \$1.2 million. The first of two phases is expected to begin immediately. The first phase will focus on environmental protection methods, stormwater needs and opportunities, and possibilities for restoration. During the second phase, the study team will concentrate on the detailed design of restoration projects.

Earlier fish sampling, conducted in connection with the study, found a Maryland designated rare fish, the Ironside Shiner, in one of the tributaries. The study results will include methods to protect the fish.

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Media List

The Enterprise, (Lexington Park), fax: 301-737-2896, Wednesdays, Fridays

St. Mary's Today, (Lexington Park), fax: 301-475-6638, Tuesdays

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